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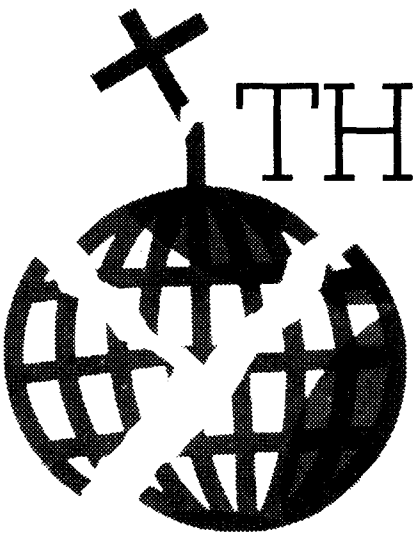

THE CATHOLIC CRISIS

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NEWS & VIEWS

The 'Century' Goes Up

The Christian Century found it hard to be jolly during the season of Christmas past. For it was then that the *Century* came to grips with rising publishing costs and escalating mail rates by raising subscription costs. As of Jan. 1, the *Century* costs $12 a year. That's a 40 percent hike over the old charge of $8.50.

As it is, the *Century* will still have a huge operating deficit. Given inflation and the Post Office Department's murderous new rates for 2nd-class mail, the *Century's* projected deficit for 1971-72 is over $100,000. The Christian Century Foundation, publisher of the ecumenical weekly, will continue to depend on contributions and earnings from a "modest" endowment to keep it solvent.

The *Century* is fortunate to have an endowment fund, however modest—particularly now that the International Monetary Fund has reached an agreement on a new pattern of exchange rates among the world's leading currencies. This might snap the stock market to life and make endowment funds more remunerative than they have been during the stock market recession of the past few years.

But even so, the old cost gap between what it takes to produce a magazine and what a magazine can reasonably charge for its product will remain sizable. For the past two years, it has cost the *Century* about $14.50 to maintain each subscription. That means that with its new rate, the *Century* is still going to be losing $2.50 per subscription.

That's a considerable spread, but not as great as some others. Bill Buckley writes in his new book, *Cruising Speed*, that it costs approximately $20 a year to produce each *National Review*; subscribers are buying it for $12. The difference is made up by fund appeals and Buckley's activities as a lecturer and TV personality.

In a way, it's survival by economic calisthenics.

So the big question: how long can independent journals of opinion and news go on, when their already precarious existence is challenged not only by the economics of everyday life, but by government itself. The former can be grappled with, but can the inflationary pressures of the latter? U.S. postal rates rose initially for newspapers and magazines last May 15; another rate hike is scheduled for July; by the time the full proposed rate for 2nd-class mail is in effect on Jan. 1, 1976, there will be a cost leap of 146.1 percent.

How many journals are going to be able to survive that rate rise?

The Nixon Administration is going to have a lot answer for to history, if it presses ahead with its postal rate program and makes opinion and news publishing the preserve of conglomerates or the independently wealthy.

Fostering Religion?

The Christian Science Church's publishing problems are very likely little different from those of any other church or independent institution, but, unlike the *Christian Century*, it was able to be jolly this past Christmas. For clearing the Congress in time for Christmas was a bill giving the church an exclusive 75-year copyright on earlier editions of Mary Baker Eddy's *Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures*.

Normally, a copyright is for 28 years, renewable for another 28 years. The 56-year total on the latest, 1906 version of Mrs. Eddy's book expired in 1962, but the copyright has been continued on a year-to-year basis. The 75-year extension is unprecedented. So also, the granting of copyright on editions of the books which were not originally under copyright.

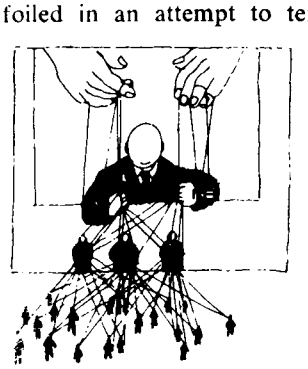
Proceeds from the sale of Mrs. Eddy's book run to $200,000 annually, but the church disclaimed the idea that money was behind its pressure for an exclusive, retroactive copyright. The concern was for doctrinal purity. Christian Science Church spokesmen said they wanted people reading *Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures* to get the true authorized version, unadulterated by textual revisions made by dissident groups publishing their own versions, "revised" and/or "modernized."

All of which made some people wonder what had happened to the First Amendment guarantee against use of government power to foster any religion or to suppress any doctrine. . . . And caused others to wonder whether the bishops or anyone else might seek from Congress a retroactive copyright on the Bible, thereby preventing new versions, revisions and modernizing—all, of course, in the name of protecting "doctrinal purity."

Aid and Catholics

The awkward situation in which the Catholic educational institution receiving federal and state aid can occasionally find itself was dramatically pointed up in recent days—to the embarrassment of two prominent colleges.

At Fairfield University in Fairfield, Conn., Jesuit president William McInnes was foiled in an attempt to terminate a tenured faculty member who quit the priesthood and then altered his religious faith.



Roadrunner/LNS

Working against Father McInnes: his testimony in *Tilton v. Richardson*, the case which upheld the right of church-related colleges to receive federal funds for building construction. Father McInnes testified that Fairfield had no "religious qualification" for faculty membership—a position which facilitates aid of course, but which imposes a whole new set of criteria on Catholic college administrators, as Father McInnes unhappily learned.

Meanwhile, Manhattanville College in Purchase, N.Y., is busy rebutting statements by Bill Buckley (in *Cruising Speed* and *The New Yorker*) that Manhattanville president Sister Elizabeth McCormack, RSCJ, did not want Manhattanville referred to as a "Catholic college" during her appearance on Buckley's TV show, "Firing Line."

Sister Elizabeth says her position was misrepresented.

Buckley says it wasn't. "The research suggests," he comments, "she was perhaps driven to [her position] by the Blaine Amendment, which is a part of the Constitution of the State of New York and says that no state aid can go to a religious college."

To Sister Elizabeth's long and not entirely convincing rejoinder in *The New Yorker*, Buckley wrote: *Radix omnium malorum cupiditas est.*

Odds and Ends

— Lots of implications in a paragraph in a recent Betty Medsger story in the *Washington Post*: "Surveys taken by President Nixon's Commission on School Finance indicate that the decline in Catholic elementary and secondary school enrollment—down in the last five years from 5.5 million to about 4.5 million—would have occurred if no Catholic school had closed." JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Nixon's 'Revolution'

Champaign, Ill.

To the Editors: There are two basically erroneous implications made in Michael Harrington's article ["Mr. Nixon's Reactionary Revolution," Nov. 26] which make a careful reader suspect that he, too, is victim to some common myths about American history.

"There has been no progressive change in the shares of income for a generation," he says. The statement is true, of course, but implies that some "progressive change" had occurred prior to World War II.

This is related to his second erroneous statement, with which he closes his article: "Nixon will have earned a place, alongside Herbert Hoover, as an unwitting agent of radical change." Granted that Nixon is "unwitting," it is a gross misstatement to imply (as Harrington does in both places) that the New Deal was in any way radical or even progressive.

What the FDR "reforms" accomplished, as Harrington ought to know, was simply the taxing of the poor and middle classes to increase the wealth of the upper class. By any statistics I have been able to find, the *percentage* of people living in poverty in the U.S. is the same now as it was in 1920.

FRED E. SCHOOLEY

REPLY: All the statistical studies I know indicate that there was some positive change in the income-share at the bottom of the economy, particularly for blacks during World War II. That this leaves an outrageous maldistribution of wealth is unquestionable; but change did take place and there is no point in ignoring it.

The New Deal certainly did not create a just social order but neither can it be dismissed as simply the taxing of the poor and middle classes to favor the rich. The industrial working class significantly bettered its position. You don't even have to quote statistics. Ask

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CATHOLICS AND PEACE

Two weeks ago in these pages we presented the Christmas pastoral letter of Bishop Carroll T. Dozier of Memphis, entitled "Peace: Gift & Task." It combined historical perspective on the church's traditional approach to peace with the specific here and now, as in Bishop Dozier's pledge of personal assistance to any conscientious objector to the war in Vietnam. To us the bishop's pastoral letter seemed worthy of printing in any issue and particularly suitable for the Christmas issue in which it appeared, concerned as it was with peace and the Christian duty to strive for it. We were, therefore, glad to publish it, and we think it likely that most *Commonweal* readers received the message with interest and approval. Yet we do not doubt that Bishop Dozier's pastoral letter and the spirit that motivated it will also be resented and bitterly criticized in some Catholic circles, even in his own diocese. Why should this be so?

As we go into the New Year, the front pages of the daily papers are filled with reminders of wars past, present and future. A few Americans and many Vietnamese are still dying in that unhappy country; scattered atrocities in the wake of the just-concluded war in Pakistan make horrifying pictures; a potential war between the Arab nations and Israel threatens to break out at any moment. Catholics are disturbed by such events, certainly, and not less than other people; yet it does seem to us that Catholics as a group are not as dedicated to the day-by-day, often humdrum work of peace as they should be. Some weeks ago Gordon Zahn documented in our pages the relative lack of concern over the Vietnam war demonstrated by the American bishops, and we concur, but the charge could be widened, we think, to embrace the larger Catholic community. To their honor, there are a few like the Berrigan brothers, but what about the rest of us? We don't know any recent statistics on the matter, so we are going to some extent by letters to the editor and imprecise impressions, but we do remember that in President Johnson's time the Gallup poll showed that Catholics significantly outdistanced Protestants and Jews in supporting the war. No doubt this disproportionate support has now dwindled, but why should it have existed in the first place?

A few obvious explanations, if not justifications, immediately suggest

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themselves. First, there is the traditional American Catholic anti-Communism; if the guerrillas in Vietnam had been presented as fanatic Buddhists instead of Communists, the Catholic attitude might have been sharply different. Then there is the still-lingering urge of the descendants of an immigrant church to prove their patriotism; this is a factor that should not be underestimated even today. Finally, another reason for the too-easy Catholic assent to war, any war, is the ingrained Catholic stress on respect for authority; this tradition has tended to make Catholics suspend their critical faculties entirely on the ways wars begin and are conducted. Even leaving aside Vietnam, for instance, how many American Catholic voices were raised during World War II against the atrocities of Hamburg or Dresden, Hiroshima or Nagasaki?

Are things changing now? We are happy to say we think they are, and Bishop Dozier's letter is one good example. A new generation of American Catholics is arising (Bishop Dozier is not young, but he is a new bishop), and its members tend to see things through new eyes. In theory, if not in practice, Catholic tradition has always upheld and honored the peacemaker, and over the centuries the church officially tried to restrain violence, to lessen it, to "civilize" it—witness the long effort to set down at least the minimum conditions that had to be met before a war could be considered just, and this in spite of aberrations like the Crusades. With the exception of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement, it is this tradition of peace-making that American Catholics have taken too lightly. What is the change that is beginning to make itself seen? The difference, if we are not mistaken, is that the younger generation of Catholics is not hung up on rigid anti-Communism, on authority, or on the need to "prove their patriotism"; its members are determined to transform the traditional Christian reconciling role from unobserved theory into nitty-gritty practice, and this determination is symbolized by the Berrigans. The Fathers Berrigan, we think, are in more than the usual reverential sense fathers of a new generation—a numerically small one, perhaps, but a generation dedicated to the work of peace. This, at least, is our estimate, and if we are correct in it, it provides a happy note on which to welcome the New Year.

STAFF CHANGE

This week associate editor Peter Steinfels leaves the staff to become Associate for the Humanities at the Institute of Society, Ethics and the Life Sciences. He takes with us our thanks for his many contributions to the magazine over the last six years. At the same time we are pleased to announce that Mr. Steinfels will continue his regular column on an every-other-week basis. THE EDITORS

No Muscle Is the Message

Unity is easier to talk about than to achieve. This became apparent here when ministers from 95 underdeveloped nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America met to plan a united front position on trade and development. The resulting mild statement and program will be presented to the developed world next April at the meeting of the UN Commisison of Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Santiago, Chile.

Despite the common denominator of poverty affecting the 95 nations, the delegates were unable to formulate the specifics needed to overcome their plight. The conclusions contained platitudes about the need for rich nations to help the poor so as to "contribute to the creation of conditions of stability and well-being for all humanity." Lacking is the formation of mechanisms by which the underdeveloped nations, as a whole, can effectively pressure the developed world, principally the U.S., to tailor aid and trade policies to the needs of the poor nations.

This failure is unfortunate for the concerns of the underdeveloped world are real and pressing. What is more, they are tied to the policies of the rich.

The recent meeting here brought together delegates from nations representing 41.72 percent of the world's population and 49.8 percent of the earth's land mass. Yet these nations receive only 9.2 percent of the world's annual income as compared with 26.2 percent for the U.S. and 52.2 percent for Europe. Of the 95 nations, 30 have annual per capita incomes of $100 or less. At the botton of the list are Alto Volta and Burundi, with a rate of $50.

The situation is getting worse relative to the rich countries. During the much heralded UN development decade of the 1960s, per capita income in the developed world increased by $650, while for the poor countries the augment averaged $40. The underdeveloped world also suffered a loss in its share of world trade. In 1960, it had 21.3 percent; by 1970, this had dropped to 17.6 percent.

The nations met here under the rubric "II Reunion of the Group of 77." The name refers to the original number of countries which met in 1967 in Algeria to plan a united position for the 1968 UNCTAD conference. The immediate concern of the Lima meeting was the current world financial crisis heightened by the U.S. defensive measures taken last August. Although these measures have proven to be especially hard on the underdeveloped countries, the group's final decision was formation of a study commission.

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The U.S. decision to let the dollar float on the international market had meant de facto devaluation of many currencies in the underdeveloped world in relation to the strong currencies of Europe and Japan. This had occurred because in the underdeveloped world the U.S. dollar is practically the equivalent of gold; it is a main foreign reserve currency used to pay external debts and to back up the value of local currency. The *unilateral* decision by the U.S. to float the dollar especially does not sit favorably, because the U.S. has required international consultation through the International Monetary Fund before underdeveloped nations can devalue their currencies. "We all know that U.S. inflation is at the base of this problem, an inflation which is more intense than that of other industrialized centers," Raul Prebisch, director general of the Latin-American Social and Economic Planning Institute, said before the delegates. "This would have conducted the U.S. to a parallel devaluation of the dollar if it would have followed the rules of the game it always proclaims to the rest of the world, especially to the developing countries."

In many delegate speeches, the current crisis was seen as part of an outdated international financial system in which the underdeveloped world has no voice. This was referred to by Chile's Foreign Minister Clodomiro Almeyda as the system's "original sin." The study commission was asked to take this into consideration during its deliberations.

A Peruvian proposal to hold a world meeting on a one-nation, one-vote basis never made out of the Latin American regional meeting. The main opponent was the pro-U.S. country of Mexico. However, the conclusion did call for elimination of the U.S. 10 percent tariff surcharge.

The reasons for the failure to pass strong resolutions are obvious after examining the socio-political diversity of the nations comprising the Group of 77. Strongly socialistic countries such as Algeria, Cuba and Yugoslavia are mixed with pro-U.S. and pro-capitalist governments such as South Korea, the Philippines and South Vietnam. While Cuba termed the U.S. its "insatiable exploiter of yesterday and its sworn enemy of today," South Vietnam asked support for the U.S. AID approach to development.

Even on a regional level there is the anomaly of Marxist Chile's having to come to terms with rightist, militaristic Brazil. This diversity produced a common denominator in the rhetoric which favored the term "developing nations" for the group as opposed to the politically fraught "Third World" or the more economically realistic "underdeveloped."

For the more radical countries, the major successes occurred before the start of the meeting. First, Cuba was admitted to the group as the 95th member. To be accepted, Cuba needed the approval of the Latin American nations to which geographic region it belongs. This acceptance is another in the gradual steps by which Latin America is reintegrating Cuba into the region, despite U.S. opposition. In the long run it may be the most important step taken at the Lima meeting as far as western hemispheric relations are concerned.

Another event with impact on the meeting was the acceptance of mainland China into the UN. The hope is that China will line up with the underdeveloped world thus giving the anti-imperialistic countries a strong club to use in their attempts to knock down the resistance of the developed countries.

For the present, however, hopes are dim. The underdeveloped world has an important message for the rich countries, but still lacks the strength to force concrete action.

AGOSTINO BONO

(*Agostino Bono is an official of Latinamerica Press in Lima, Peru.*)

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Yugoslavia's Future: Tito as Diocletian

In four nights of fierce rioting in the Croatian capital of Zagreb three students were killed by the police and several hundred more demonstrators were injured or arrested. The violence was sparked by Tito's dismissal of the popular and progressive Croatian leadership headed by Mika Tripalo and Savka Dabcevic-Kucar on charges that they had not proceeded with sufficient vigor to crush the counter-revolutionary and nationalist activities of Croatian intellectuals and university students.

The dramatic sequence of events was triggered by a ten-day strike of 30,000 Zagreb University students in support of Croatian demands for economic equality in Yugoslavia. The strike was peaceful and was called off by the student organizers early in December. But, as the strike was ending, Tito summoned an emergency meeting of Yugoslav leaders at which he lashed out at the students and the Croatian Communists.

The student strike had led to an angry confrontation between Tito and the younger, university-trained Croatian leaders over ways to handle dissent. Tito demanded the summary arrest of student leaders and the banning of critical Croat publications, such as the *Hrvatski Tjednik;* the Croats responded that dissent within constitutional limits was healthy if Yugoslavia was to achieve the proclaimed objective of creating a genuinely self-managing socialist democracy.

Tito had been thinking of "settling accounts" with those whom he regarded as chauvinists and enemy agents at least since last summer. But he postponed the showdown probably so as not to mar his visit with Nixon in Washington in November. Once home, however, he

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summoned his military chiefs, and having assured himself of their backing he confronted the Croat party leaders with his ultimatum. When they still demurred, he dismissed them and replaced them with obscure and presumably more obedient party hacks who have been ordered to purge dissidents throughout the Croat party organization.

The sudden turn of events puts a stop to the attempts by younger party leaders in all Yugoslav republics to liberalize the regime further and make it more responsive to the people, an experiment that Dubcek tried in Czechoslovakia in 1968, before it was cut short by Soviet tanks. The central role that the army played in the repression of Croatia may presage the eventual establishment of a military dictatorship in Yugoslavia; the rationale behind such a military coup, of course, would be that only the army was capable of maintaining by force Yugoslav state unity and internal order against powerful centrifugal forces.

And yet, the banning of legal dissent may in the long run have a negative effect on the prospects of Yugoslavia's survival. Repression, as it did in East Bengal, may only stimulate the dark forces of violence and terrorism in a land prone to bloody and murderous solutions; at the same time Tito's brutal attack on the students may turn the young generation not only against the dictator personally but against Yugoslavia as a state entity. Thus, the police and military repression of student and intellectual dissent may only operate to diminish the chances for the survival of Yugoslavia after Tito's death.

The specific charges leveled against the Zagreb student leaders are wholly spurious. They are neither counter-revolutionaries nor chauvinists. Ivan Zvonimir Cicak, who was elected student-pro-rector of the university last spring, is a "Christian-Communist" who sees no basic difference between the two doctrines and regards the students as the vanguard of the proletariat. To underscore his beliefs, Cicak wears a hammer and sickle and a cross in his label. Other student leaders (all of whom are now in jail) such as Drazen Budisa and Ante Paradzik are Communists; they seem to be believers in Che Guevara's revolutionary voluntarism. And yet, according to Yugoslavia's official double-think, these student radicals are "counter-revolutionaries" while Tito and his regime, who organize flying tours for hundreds of international gamblers and underworld figures to Yugoslavia's proliferating state-run casinos, are the true disciples of Karl Marx.

The truth is that the Croat students, like youth the world over, have been in ferment for years. They are alienated and angry; alienated from the structured institutions of bureaucratized and stratified society; angry at the self-serving cynicism of the ruling establishment that oppresses the workers in the name of the working class.

Similarly the leaders of the dissident Croat intellectuals are almost without exception former wartime Partisan fighters and Communists. Just to name a few: the novelist Petar Segedin; the physicist and novelist and Zagreb University Rector, Ivan Supek; the economists Sime Djodan and Marko Veselica. Gradually they became disillusioned with the slogans that were blatantly negated by the reality of Titoism: the endless talk about the rights of workers in a country where most of them earn barely subsistence wages; the slogan of "brotherhood and unity" in a country where all the nationalities are exploited in the interest of a swollen and mainly parasitic federal bureaucracy in Belgrade. All of this led the intellectuals to clamor for the implementation on the national level of the Marxist principle of, *to each according to his labor*. But Tito regards these demands as "reactionary" and "counter-revolutionary" and a threat to Yugoslav unity.

In a gloomy appraisal of Yugoslavia's future prospects *New York Times* columnist C. L. Sulzberger aptly compared Tito, now close to 80, with Diocletian in his old age. As will be recalled, Diocletian tried by repression and the persecution of Christians to prevent the Roman Empire from disintegrating. In the end he failed. Worn out and disillusioned he retired to his fortified palace at Split, in what is today Yugoslavia. From there he watched helplessly the process of disintegration continue.

There is a tragic aspect to Tito's extraordinary life. He has lived so long that he has witnessed the failure of many of his endeavors and the progressive disintegration of others. Tired and angry at his underlings and the endless problems of Yugoslav politics, he spends most of his time in the luxurious isolation of his island retreat of Brioni surrounded by a thousand gentle deer and as many servants. He seeks distraction in the company of fading movie luminaries such as Sophia Loren, Carlo Ponti and the Burtons. When he ventures forth, it is mostly to go on world tours, as he did recently when he flew to Persepolis to celebrate with Princess Grace and other royalty the anniversary of the Iranian monarchy.

Tito is conscious that he has not been able to solve the pressing problems afflicting and dividing his quarreling subjects. Three hundred thousand workers are unemployed; a half million more have migrated to the West in search of work; repeated "economic reforms" have all failed; inflation continues (prices are up 17% since last year), the balance of payments is worsening, and the Soviet threat is eternally proximate and present. Now Tito has struck out angrily at the progressive Croatian party leaders, intellectuals and students, trying to restore unity by repression. But the ferment and discontent of the students and intellectuals are ultimately only the symptoms and not the causes of what is perhaps an advanced and fatal disease spreading through the Yugoslav body politic. MATTHEW M. MESTROVIC

(Matthew M. Mestrovic, a frequent contributor, is a member of the faculty at Fairleigh Dickinson University.)

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THE CHOICE OF WARS

PETER STEINFELS

THE END of the Indian-Pakistani war did not mean the end of bloodshed in Bangladesh. That is a terrible fact, a maddening one, and yet it is no surprise. What seems to be more of a surprise is that, after all the harsh education we have received in the school of Vietnam, we have learned so little. One view of the confusion in our minds about what has happened on the Asian subcontinent was expressed in the *New Leader:*

"Here is India, for example, waging a more aggressive war than any it is always criticizing Israel for, and unabashedly refusing to heed the UN's call for a cease-fire. . . . Here are Washington and Peking, each for its different reasons supporting Pakistan, lined up against India and the Soviet Union. Here are some of the most vocal opponents of the U.S. stand in Vietnam chastising the Nixon Administration for not actively supporting New Delhi against Islamabad; they are at a loss to explain, however, why they do not react to the reported snuffing out of over a hundred children's lives in a Dacca orphanage by Indian bombs as they did to similar incidents in Indochina. Meanwhile, many of the most consistent supporters of the Vietnam venture, who have repeatedly warned of neoisolationism and the perils of failing to oppose onslaughts against democracy, do not appear disturbed by this country's unwillingness to help the people of Bangladesh secure what they won peacefully at the polls."

Not all the apparent contradictions are impossible to sort out; if the victimization of children in Dacca reached even a considerable fraction of the verified—not "reported"—incidents in Vietnam, I am sure that the anti-war groups would have raised their voices. But the ironies are there, all the same; starting with the fact that the leader of a conquering nation, a woman, bears the same name (although no relation) as the 20th-century's greatest teacher of pacifism.

There is a more bitter irony for Americans who have heard the word "India" pronounced for years as though it were a definitive argument in favor of the war in Vietnam. Many were the government figures and commentators who would dismiss the more grotesque versions of the domino theory—fighting on the beaches of California, and all that—but who would insist: *"India."* After all, the world's greatest democracy. Our counter to China.

From 1952 on, the National Security Council, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Robert McNamara, William Bundy and all the friendly cast of the Pentagon Papers, were citing the threat to India as one of the reasons for our presence in Vietnam. In 1964, the Joint Chiefs warned that failure in Vietnam "would have heavy influence on the judgments of . . . India [and seven other Asian countries] with respect to U.S. durability, resolution, and trustworthiness." In 1967 McNamara was noting that "the trends in Asia today are running mostly for, not against, our interests . . . there is no reason to be pessimistic about our ability over the next decade or two to fashion alliances and combinations (involving especially Japan and India) sufficient to keep China from encroaching too far."

So now we are aligned with China, the great domino-pusher, against India, the great domino, which in turn, we are told, is becoming a Soviet satellite. The Vietnam war was never really doing anything to increase Indian respect of "U.S. durability, resolution, and trustworthiness"; but now the words are only a sorry joke.

The Americans are truly inscrutable. Various efforts have been made to divine the consistency and rationality in a policy which alienates the democratically elected government of a large nation to support the shaky military regime of a smaller one; which would rather prolong the guerrilla warfare to the point that the bourgeois, nationalist, pro-American leadership of the Awami League and the East Bengali Rifles is eliminated or transformed in favor of harder, more radical, peasant-based elements; which in the name of stability would keep the conflict stalemated and festering as we have in Vietnam. The inside story of such decision-making will have to be catalogued under Absurdist Literature. Sometimes it seems that the only U.S. policy is to oppose all guerrilla movements except those without any popular support, and to back all military governments led by men with "h's" in their names, especially when they make farces of constitutional procedures. (Actually this doesn't work out. The military leaders in Greece and Brazil lack the necessary "h's." The guiding principle of our foreign policy thus remains elusive.)

The case against India's action has been stated most effectively by Eqbal Ahmad, the Pakistani political scientist who is one of the Harrisburg defendants and who, earlier, openly denounced the actions of the West Pakistan regime in Bengal. Ahmad begins with the refugee issue. He points out that refugee camps in that area of the subcontinent—where he himself was once a refugee—are always swollen by local people. He doubts the figures accepted by Western journalists, though he also doubts those given out by Islamabad. But the war may not solve this terrible problem, which was India's ostensible reason for fighting it. The refugees, many of them Hindu, may not be easily repatriated. Ahmad also warned of the possible killing of four millions of minority people, Bengalis in the West, Biharis (non-Bengali Muslims) in

(Continued on page 330)

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THE CATHOLIC CRISIS

E. HAROLD SMITH

"The simple truth is that the malaise from which all religion in the Western world is suffering has little to do with the questions on which Vatican II principally and necessarily expended most of its time and energy . . ."

Today no Catholic—bishop, priest or layman—can refuse to recognize that the Catholic church is passing through a crisis. That this is not solely a Catholic crisis would seem frequently to be overlooked or not given due weight. Some three years ago David H. E. Read, a Presbyterian theologian, assessed the situation in this manner: "We are living through a period of upheaval perhaps more critical than the church has ever before known and we shall live through it as Christians, not as Presbyterians, Anglicans, Roman Catholics or Baptists. For the one great question before us has little to do with our denominational squabbles. It concerns the life and death of the Christian church as a recognizable community in the world ahead of us."

There are, however, aspects of the larger question that are specifically Catholic. They deserve consideration at this time because they help explain Catholic attitudes and reactions among American Catholics, particularly among the unquestionably sincere and articulate groups who entertained the hope and expectation that the Second Vatican Council would usher in the dawn of the millennium, and now it is abundantly clear that this is not likely to happen in any foreseeable future. The frustration and disappointment that result are understandable. However, there would seem to be abroad at least on some levels of Catholic life what might be termed an ecclesiastical form of McCarthyism. Its manner of reasoning would seem to be this: the failure of the religious revival to take place after the Council cannot be denied. Some individuals, groups or institutions must be responsible. In other words a search for scapegoats is in order.

In any such open hunting season the bishops composing the American hierarchy would be in an exposed position because of their office and authority. That there are undeniable factors in the average American bishop's background that seem to give weight to the charge should be openly faced. Shortly before Vatican II began, one American ordinary, and not the least influential among his peers, spoke with disarming frankness and honesty to his priests in a closed meeting. After remarking that he was about to depart for Rome, he earnestly requested their prayers for light and guidance while at the Council. He rightly felt that it was one of the heaviest responsibilities he had ever been asked to assume, said that he was not in agreement with the stated positions of the German and Dutch bishops, and as for the proposed changes made plain that he would be quite content if nothing was changed. He liked things as they were. How many of his fellow American bishops shared his sentiments?

It may be objected that this is beside the point, that the Council changed all that. Certainly many of these bishops who may be presumed to have shared such views voted in the end for extraordinarily liberal and progressive Council enactments and therefore it may be argued that they had completely changed their viewpoints. The first part of the conclusion will stand, but the second part would be impossible to substantiate. Shortly before his death three years ago the highly esteemed Archbishop of Atlanta, Paul J. Hallinan, estimated that not more than twenty-five or thirty American bishops were genuinely interested in renewal, i.e., renewal in the sense of implementing Vatican II. There are in the hierarchy in the United States two hundred and fifty bishops. Suppose for the purpose of discussion the figures were reversed, that there were two hundred and twenty bishops genuinely interested in the type of renewal the Council launched, certainly we would be further advanced toward the goals envisioned. What, however, would be the impact on the religious upheaval through which the Catholic church and all churches are passing?

The answer is not difficult—in all probability our

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condition would be substantially what it is today. The simple truth is that the malaise from which all religion in the Western world is suffering has little to do with the questions on which Vatican II principally and necessarily expended most (but not all) of its time and energy—liturgical, canonical, intramural theological discussions—topics which have been termed not inaptly "rules for good housekeeping."

The American Episcopal church offers an interesting analogy. It has always employed a more democratic method of choosing bishops, shared the Eucharistic cup with the laity, celebrated its liturgy in a vernacular whose dignity and beauty are not likely to be surpassed. The present state of this church, however, does not differ markedly from that of our own.

It may be asked, are the American bishops then in no wise responsible for the present predicament? If one is considering the question basically, then that is precisely the contention being argued here—they are not responsible. If one wishes to criticize on a less basic or administrative level, of course there may well be grounds for criticism. To this writer at least this seems to have been done already with dignity and fairness by a competent journalist (Robert Hoyt, *Harper's,* October 1971).

The Council's Fault?

If the expectations to which Vatican II gave rise have not been realized, is it possible that the Council itself was at fault? The evidence for this is completely lacking. Even granting that it was not clear then, it is abundantly clear now that in some quarters at least too much was expected from the Council. This hope was unrealistic and without historical foundation. What Ecumenical Council, for example, has renewed the life of the church? The hundredth anniversary of Vatican I in 1970 was allowed to pass without even a commemorative letter calling attention to its achievements. Vatican II was of surpassing importance but not for the reasons frequently advanced. What then did the last Council accomplish?

The transcendent achievement of the recent Council was the major decision of the Council Fathers to move the church squarely into the stream of world history. This necessitated the rejection of "classicism"—a system of thought in which truth is so objective that it can exist apart from anyone's possession of it—a system in which there is no historical dimension to truth, no development or growth. In its stead they adopted "historical consciousness," which acknowledges the objectivity of truth but also holds that truth is an affair of the human subject and of history. Since it is an historical affair it is affected by all the relatives of history. In the perception of truth the human intelligence has a function that must be conceived as being creative. There is truth, therefore, in the philosophical error of idealism, i.e., somehow the mind creates truth in a sense. The transition from "classicism" to "historical consciousness" is one but not the only aspect of the cultural crisis in which the church is involved today. Furthermore, certain results have followed from this decision of the Council.

First, the religious problems of the world today concern God; the church is not the focus of interest. Secondly, a crisis of certainty has resulted. While the articles of the Creed are still professed, the question is being asked whether or not we have an adequate understanding of their contents. This is the quest in which theologians today are engaged. Thirdly, the action of Vatican II makes it imperative that genuine renewal must mean a return to the sources of the life of the church—the sources in history which are also trans-historical, the Advent of Christ, and the Word of Christ in the Gospels.

Shortly before his death four and a half years ago John Courtney Murray expressed himself on this subject. His statement concluded as follows: "The question is not, is the Catholic church the one true church? The answer is yes, that is our belief. The question is what is the church, what is the true church which is one?

"The theological way of putting the question today is not how certain we are. The question today is how much we have really understood, how much more is there to be understood in the traditional affirmation of faith and, above all, how are these traditional affirmations to be related to my human experience—their relevance."

In what sense if any it may be asked did the Council fail? A recent work, *The End of Religion,* a book perhaps of epochal proportions, considers this question briefly. The author, Aelred Graham, includes these observations in his consideration: "In religion, 'conservative' or 'progressive' are irrelevant categories. The categories that really apply are 'radical' and 'superficial'. . . . Within this terminology the majority of the discussions at the Vatican Council were 'superficial.' So have been most of the subsequent elaborations of Vatican themes —necessarily. But what the younger generation and many of the older are seeking today is a restatement of the radical approach to religion in living examples. These not being forthcoming and the churches impeded by their own structures there result confusion and bewilderment among 'progressives' and complacency mixed with fear among 'conservatives'. . . .

"No one, it seems to me, is particularly to blame for the situation that now confronts us: one of confusion and uncertainty. The disparity between the official church's claims on its own behalf and what the world in general including many Catholics is prepared to concede is the real question at issue. The Second Vatican Council was a symptom not a cause or a possible solvent of the unrest that lay behind the apparently monolithic facade. The Council's participants were habituated to exercising the church's regulative functions, not to examining with scrupulous reference to the original Christian proclamation what their limitations might be. . . . As a result

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there is a greater sense of freedom among the faithful, an increased awareness that the church is not so much hierarchical as communal, but little evidence of any deepening of the interior life. Encouragement has been given from the highest quarters to the practice of traditional asceticism; what has been lacking is an indication that humanity's present condition is well understood. There have been many encounters, an abundance of dialogue and much discussion but few signs of 'renewal' with regard to ways and means directed to raising the general level of mutual understanding and compassion."

The most curious turn that the search for scapegoats has taken is the recent attempt to place the blame for the critical condition in which the church finds itself at the present time on a limited group of Catholic writers and two or three journals and publications of opinion.

A few scholarly journalists, priests and theologians compose this battalion of the enemy. That this type of approach is absurd is evident on the face of it and no time need be expended here in discussing it except to note that it represents a regrettable tendency for individuals to arrogate to themselves the right to sit in judgment on fellow Catholics.

That some of the opinions of the cited writers may have been wrong (and may be again in the future) or that time may have proved some of the positions of these journals untenable is not the point at issue. Nor is it maintained that they have always been in possession of all the facts or always felicitous in their phrasing. However, the works of even the greatest minds in the church have been condemned—in the thirteenth century Thomas Aquinas' writings were proscribed by the University of Paris, and today all his views are not and could not be accepted. If history is a dependable guide, it is clear that thinkers and writers such as those who have recently come under attack and been judged less than Catholic are not only entitled to support and encouragement but by their unappreciated intellectual struggles and labors are contributing to the future welfare of the church. It has ever been thus.

Seventy-five years ago Father John Zahm, one of Notre Dame's all-time greats, made an heroic attempt to reconcile the evolutionary theory with revealed religion. His book was censured. In the next generation, Dr. John M. Cooper, recognized American anthropologist, was defending this theory in his classes at the Catholic University when it was not considered the thing to do. The names of those who attempted to refute him as well as their writings are forgotten. The work of Zahm and Cooper still stands.

Duchesne, the author of a history of the early church published sixty years ago, long looked askance at in the highest Catholic quarters, still maintains his place in the bibliographies of the most prestigious secular universities. Cardinal Gasquet's works, on the other hand, more partisan than scholarly, are no longer listed in these same bibliographies.

Newman and Acton, both Catholic to the core of their being, were not the heroes of the Catholic Right at the the time of Vatican I. Their positions today are secure, and Newman had more influence, it is safe to say, on Vatican II than did St. Robert Bellarmine. Manning's and George Ward's theological views, on the other hand, have not been pertinent for years.

Two well known American representatives at the recent Council have died since its close: John Courtney Murray and Francis Connell. If the twenty-first century is interested in the dogmatic and moral questions that engaged the minds of those two worthy sons of the church, Murray will still be quoted; Connell will not.

It would seem we can all be better employed than in the search for scapegoats on whom to place the blame for the present religious situation. On the positive side are there attitudes to be cultivated as well as positions to be adopted that would be helpful at this time? Three at least suggest themselves.

The first is a willingness to recognize that the present signs do not indicate a golden age for institutional religion in the years immediately ahead. It would almost seem that Lord Grey's words in 1914 relative to the political situation in Europe could be paraphrased: the lights are going out all over western Christendom and they may not be lighted again in our lifetime. In this the realists are as one: Murray (in the months preceding his death) spoke frankly of darker days to come. Possibly Chesterton's lines would sum up his thought in this matter:

> I tell you naught for your comfort,
> Yea, naught for your desire,
> Save that the sky grows darker yet
> And the sea rises higher.

Peter Berger, sociologist and active Lutheran layman, has written: "The traditional religions are likely to survive in small enclaves and pockets and perhaps there will be pockets of Asian religions in America too." His stress is that religion will decline not because it is false or irrelevant but simply because of social and psychological forces that are stronger. Aelred Graham in the work already cited affirms: "The troubles through which the ecclesiastical establishment is passing, even while

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they elicit the sympathy of thoughtful onlookers, are not hard to account for, nor unhappily are they likely to grow less."

Hence in many matters a tentative and open-minded approach would seem to serve best both the individual Catholic and the church. A recent letter of the Holy Father stressed the fact that the church does not profess to have the answers to all the local social problems in various countries or one pat solution that must be adopted by all. Is it not possible that this approach may be utilized in other fields besides the social field, especially at this time when the Graeco-Roman culture in which the church took root has passed and the "classicism" that held sway for many centuries has been superseded?

Above all, the Scriptural admonition to possess our souls in patience would seem almost the most important lesson to learn. It well may be a hundred years, e.g., before Catholic moral teaching and all the nuances of sex unearthed by Freud and by others since his time are completely at home with each other. We walk by the light that is vouchsafed us—no one, Christian or non-Christian, can do more. Not the least important aspect of this practice of patience should be a willingness to allow sufficient freedom of action to writers and thinkers who at the very least are attempting to open wider vistas, climb unfamiliar hills, shed increased light on life's basic problems. The past has always vindicated their predecessors. It is the prophets who live on forever, the guardians who die in a day.

CAN ITALIAN DEMOCRACY SURVIVE?

JOHN NAVONE

"A national survey of public opinion has disclosed that three of four Italians would welcome an enlightened dictator to put their house in order."

In a nation where the performance of democratic institutions is poor, it is not surprising that one-third of the voters cast their ballots for non-democratic parties. This is the approximate number of Italians who vote for the Communist and Neo-Fascist parties. There are good reasons for the growing disenchantment of Italians with democratic institutions.

The governing coalition of Christian Democrats, Socialists and Social Democrats is deeply divided on most issues. Furthermore, the Christian Democrats are split into at least nine factions. In the 952-man Chamber of Deputies the dominant Christian Democrats, with 400 seats, are often neutralized by the left-wing bloc led by the Communists and sometimes including the Socialists, for a total of 425 seats.

The center-left experiment of the governing coalition is considered by many to be a failure because of the profound contradictions in the ruling parties that make it impossible for a government to achieve the necessary reforms.

The vast size and inefficiency of Italian bureaucracy discredit the democratic system. A Turin publication speaks of the need of inspiring trust in the institutions and organs of the state, so that Italians will no longer feel "the earth tremble under our feet." The present condition of bureaucracy is a threat to a viable democracy here.

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Italy, in this respect, offers a lesson to those who recommend the abolition of private enterprise. The Italian experience should make them weigh the consequences of a government's having to shoulder huge new burdens. Giant corporations would not disappear. They would simply be merged into unimaginably vast government ministries Italian-style, and bureaucracy would conquer all.

Despite impressive strength, the Italian Communist party has not seized power either by revolution or through popular-front alliance with other leftist parties. Italy remains essentially conservative. Even the Communists are not very revolutionary. C. L. Sulzberger once affirmed: "Italy is the only country where both the outmoded Karl Marx and the outmoded Adam Smith are venerated." A British Tory told a Christian Democratic Congress: "We are far more to the left than the extreme left of your center."

The maneuvers surrounding the presidential election had assumed increased importance although, constitutionally, the presidency is a ceremonial post, the main executive powers being in the hands of the premier. With many right-wingers favoring a presidential system, an ambitious incumbent could play a much greater role.

Once installed, the new president will be called on to name a premier to succeed Colombo, who will automatically present his government's resignation. The choice is significant, because there is considerable pressure from the right to oust the Socialists and form a center or center-right government.

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The new president faces a critical economic situation. Budget Minister Antonio Giolitti announced in October that Italy is sliding into its worst postwar recession with the grim possibility of zero growth, and that the rest of 1971 is too full of uncertainties for predicting anything at all about 1972. For the first time in 25 years, more than a million workers are unemployed. Their numbers are being increased by the influx of Italian workers from Germany, where a recession is already forcing many of the 408,000 Italian laborers there to lose their jobs. Mass layoffs are spreading from the chronically sick Italian construction and textile industries to such bastions of stability as Pirelli and Zanussi, Europe's leading producer of domestic appliances. Italy's industrial production dropped a full 7 percent this August compared to August of 1970, lower than it was two years ago.

Investors are increasingly reluctant to leave their money in Italian factories, let alone put in more. Those who can, are selling out, even at a loss; foreign investors are increasingly moving instead to Eastern European Socialist countries like Yugoslavia, where labor is still docile and cheap.

Premier Emilio Colombo, who came to power 16 months ago, has succeeded in squeezing bills on tax reform and housing through parliament. After nine years of debate, a new tax reform was passed on Oct. 7 which will make tax collection easier for the government and evading harder for the taxpayer. It will shift the brunt of taxation from indirect to direct taxes. The tax reform eliminates such antiquated taxes as the salt tax that dates to Imperial Rome, and replaces them with four taxes on income and two on consumers. Everyone earning more than $3200 must pay 10 percent in taxes. The tax increases to a maximum of 72 percent for anyone making more than $800,000. The new reform brings Italy into closer tax structure with its Common Market partners.

To restore public confidence in the government and to check public opinion's shift to the right, the Colombo government launched a crime-busting program. Thousands of police using helicopters, motor launches and dogs arrested 408 persons in southern Italy and Sicily on Oct. 3. They seized guns, ammunition; they recovered stolen cars, paintings and other loot. They charged 4,672 persons with failing to submit to police controls imposed by law on Mafia suspects. On Oct. 5, the national crackdown on crime moved to Rome, where police stopped more than 12,000 persons in a midnight-to-dawn sweep through the city. A few days later, the massive drive moved into northern Italy.

Italian public opinion is demanding law and order. This demand had grown so strong that on Oct. 5 the Colombo Government postponed municipal elections likely to give new strength to the neo-Fascist opposition. Officials blamed the postponement on the technicality that municipal officials would be too occupied at the time with a nationwide decennial census to handle the additional chore of vote-counting. The new election involves 1.5 million voters. The Neo-Fascists almost tripled their vote in June, when 20 percent of the voters went to the polls. The Neo-Fascist deputies filed a motion in parliament calling the census a pretext and demanded that the vote take place as scheduled. The Neo-Fascists know the government is frightened by the rightist upsurge. They now feel sufficiently supported by Italy's "silent majority" to take on the leftists in street brawls. On Nov. 24, Milan was paralyzed by violent battles between leftist and rightist radicals.

Last year, a national survey of public opinion disclosed that approximately three of four Italians would welcome an enlightened dictator to put their house in order. They envied France for having had a DeGaulle, and would like someone like him for Italy.

Italy's long economic boom enabled Italians to evade the problem of a much-needed political renewal. It was largely on the assumption that economic prosperity was a surrogate for political renewal that Emilio Colombo —a brilliant economist—was made Premier. However, it does not seem that any serious attempt is being made to take into account the aging of Italy's political institutions and to provide for their renewal. These institutions require periodic redesign, if only because of their tendency to decay. The failure to update Italy's political institutions means that so much of what demands immediate attention is left undone because of political factionalism, opportunism and an inefficient bureaucracy. Justice delayed is justice denied. The inefficiency of Italian public administration gives the saying a special relevance, for example, in the case of those who receive their pensions several years late.

Approximately $4.5 billion of state money appropriated in the last few years is still unused because of bureaucratic encumbrances. It is within this context that the government is now planning massive new public investment in school-building, hosuing, roads, southern industries. Inasmuch as state-owned enterprises account for half of national industrial investment here, this should encourage the private half to move forward; however, there is little reason to believe that the fresh appropriations woud be used much faster than the former one. It is within this context that the Colombo government has allocated $400 million to save Venice. It is to be hoped that this sum will pass through the labyrinthine way of Italian bureaucracy soon enough to save the city; otherwise, Venice stands a good chance of becoming its most illustrious victim.

Government bureaucracy has also been sluggish in bringing into existence two new satellite cities for Naples. Each city is planned for 60,000 residents. The auto industry will be the economic mainstay of one of these new cities. Both cities are urgently needed to

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relieve the congestion, pollution, and unemployment of Naples.

The recession and unemployment are contributing to a growing impatience with Italy's democratic institutions and their hopelessly inefficient bureaucracy. Many had hoped that the Socialists would overcome their differences and offer the electorate a viable alternative to coalition governments and to the Christian Democrats. These hopes have been almost destroyed by a factionalism which has divided Italy's Socialists into several parties.

Although the Christian Democrats are Italy's largest party, they have never received enough votes to govern without forming a coalition. Recent coalitions with the Socialists have produced results for which many Christian Democrats would not wish to assume responsibility. Coalitions often force both parties to compromise to such an extent that neither is satisfied with the results, and neither wishes to claim full responsibility for them. The Christian Democrats and Communists are the only two grass-roots parties. Two-thirds of the Italian people vote for one of these two parties. The Socialist parties appeal more to the middle-class than to the grass roots.

Italians must renew their political institutions, preserving variety, alternatives, choices and multiple focuses of power and initiative. They must develop their human resources to make such pluralism effective. Their problem is not so much one of values, but of making those values live in Italian political institutions. Public opinion here is demanding a political institutional framework in which individual responsibility is feasible. Only a radical renewal of political institutions will enable individuals to serve effectively. Time is running out for renewing the machinery of democratic government, frustration increasingly threatens Italian democracy.

THE SCREEN

BONDS AND $

Ian Fleming's novels fairly crackle with messages from the libido. They are to the art of literature what a Rorschach card is to a painting. If I read them aright Fleming was orally fixated, which explains why the last James Bond film, *You Only Live Twice*, was obsessed with death by mastication. (It is also the reason that Fleming was able to make a career out of food reviewing for the London *Times*.) In the new film, *Diamonds Are Forever*, Fleming's oral fixation is evident from the number of people who suffocate. The film opens with Blofeld, one of Bond's nemeses, being buried alive in a mud pot. At least six other people—a spinster school teacher, a Las Vegas B girl, two lesbian karate experts and two homosexual assassins—are then more or less drowned. And Bond himself is sealed up in a coffin, trapped in a gas-filled elevator and buried alive in an underground pipeline.

For all their psychic energy, however, the novels have had one immense liability as film scripts: the character of Bond himself. What really made it possible for the novels to become popular films was dressing up Ian Fleming's alter ego in Sean Connery's body. Besides giving the godlike spy that bit of human substance he needed, a great hairy brute like Connery disguised the fact that Bond is, at heart, a bore. Bond is forever giving pedantic lectures on wine or food, and thus betraying the dried-up personality of Ian Fleming within him. In the new film Connery is in as good form as ever, but the role of Bond seems even more tedious than it did a few years ago. The new film is a bit late to be part of the original series, though a bit early to have camp appeal; and script writers Richard Maibaum and Tom Mankiewicz, along with director Guy Hamilton, seem unsure why they are making another Bond feature just now. their one fresh idea is to throw in some self-parody—a very adroit chase sequence and two or three other vignettes. These aren't much relief from two hours of Bondage, but they're all the film has to offer.

Richard Brooks' new film, *$*, is also at its best when executing that old cliché:, the chase. This time the en-

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ergy expended seems primarily physical, as Warren Beatty, with a murderous smuggler and a black marketeer on his tail, runs through the train yards and up the apparently endless public stairs of Hamburg, Germany. His pursuers think he has the loot from a bank robbery with him, so on and on he runs—from the city right out into the country, and on and on. A chase like this is always a crowd-pleaser because it requires the crowd to make less mental effort than does almost any other form of action. It makes us feel that the tension is almost unbearable, but in truth it is so easy to follow that it can't help being relaxing.

The rest of Brooks' film can be thought of as scene-setting and pretext—something to lead up to this chase and give it an excuse to occur. When Brooks first became a contract director at a Hollywood studio, he spent several months, eight hours a day, screening the studio's past product. That represents a formidable education, but *$* suggests it was wasted on Brooks. Everything used in this film could have been learned without seeing anything made before 1965. In fact much of what's in this film, and especially the plot, can be found in a film called *Perfect Friday* that came out in 1970. There too the bank robbery was an inside job, and the $ were stashed in the safe-deposit box of a double-crossing, female accomplice. If you've seen *Perfect Friday,* catch just the chase in *$,* the last forty minutes or so, on the front end of some double bill. The only thing you'll be missing is Goldie Hawn, who ought to show up, used to better advantage, in later films.

One of the things I don't like about James Bond movies is the same thing I don't like about musicals. Both have inverted priorities: they neglect what is fundamental and artful to achieve what is extraneous and frivolous. Where one is too sentimental, the other is too cynical; but otherwise they are, in their stock characters and elaborately choreographed action, very similar. Ken Russell's *The Boy Friend* doesn't overcome these limitations either, although Russell seems to have had some thought of doing so. He has taken Sandy Wilson's musical about the 1920s and made a film about one matinee performance of it given at a run-down London repertory theater sometime during the 1930s. At curtain time the leading lady hasn't shown, so the assistant stage manageress (Twiggy) has to stand in. The rest of the cast is ready to sleep-walk through the show when word arrives that the Hollywood director, de Thrill, is out front. This situation allows Russell to toy with the contrast between the sappy emotions of the characters in the musical and the aggressive, cunning efforts of the cast to upstage each other and attract de Thrill's attention. It allows Russell to play off the tacky staging of the musical against de Thrill's lavish, Busby-Berkeley visions of how each number might be filmed.

Or rather, Russell's play-within-a-play might have allowed him to do these things. As it is he hasn't made the contrasts strong enough to sustain any tension. The theater sets are really as extravagant as the staging de Thrill does in his head, and the film gets free of Tony Walton's monotonously perfect set designs only once—when dancer Tommy Tune gives a dust-raising private performance up in the flies of the theater. Everything else in the film happens on the same, candy-cane level of unreality. De Thrill's fantasies appeal to our nostalgia about 30s movies just as Wilson's play appeals to our nostalgia about 20s musicals. And since Wilson wrote *The Boy Friend* as a put-on, Russell's film becomes a put-on of a put-on, which is an art form too subtle and inbred to be effective. In the end Russell's stage manageress gets the "room in Bloomsbury" and everything else recommended in Wilson's songs. In both life and art the side of human nature we thought we glimpsed earlier—the side that's catty and egotistical—has turned out to be of no consequence.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

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ONE MAN'S TEN

After the movie reviewer recovers from seeing a plethora of previews in December, he has to make out his list of the Year's Best Ten. He is in no mood for it; but I think these lists are important. The reviewer has to look back over the year, and his readers know better, when they see the list, how to judge him and what to expect in the future. So without further palaver, here are my ten. On the whole it was not a good year in cinema, so I was surprised in making the list at how many good movies there were.

Claire's Knee, The Go-Between, Carnal Knowledge, Sunday Bloody Sunday, Minnie and Moskowitz, Une Femme Douce, The Garden of Delights, Mary Queen of Scots, A Clockwork Orange, Fiddler on the Roof.

That's the Ten—but there are no doubt good things to be said about *Nicholas and Alexandra, The Last Picture Show, Macbeth* and your own favorites of the year. Add them.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG

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TOM DORRIEN

LOVE POEM

Watching snowflakes touch the surface
of the Dead River,

I was not thinking of you at all.

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CANADIAN CLUB

Nora Magid

"those nice people who live up there in the frozen north, who ski, who have no Vietnam. . . ."

WHILE IT is entirely possible for an American to get through a day or write a book without mentioning Canada, the converse does not seem to be true. Canadians, who travel wearing maple leaves and proclaiming their nationality as mechanically and perpetually as Jake in Mordecai Richler's *St. Urbain's Horseman*, and who define themselves as not American and not British, yet as English and not French (or vice versa), compensate, according to George Woodcock, "for their physical weakness by assuming an air of moral superiority towards Americans, not unlike that which Scots assume towards English." Later in his book *Canada and the Canadians* (Stackpole, $9.95), by way of supporting this, Woodcock manages to add that "Perhaps the most neighborly action Canada could perform to America would be to help it to rediscover its own better self, the America of ideals, dreams and fulfillments that has been lost in the jungles of Indochina." Yet it is the Americans, he claims, who in effect patronize the Canadians, who "ignore their friends and pay attention to their enemies." As someone who lives with a foot in both countries, I suspect that most Americans(if they contemplate Canadians at all, see them as those nice people who live up there in the frozen north, who ski, who have no Vietnam and no draft problem, but who do, again in the words of Mordecai Richler, have a French thing that may get out of hand.

It's not that simple, and Woodcock's profile, a catchall travelogue-cum-history-cum-analysis, provides a useful introduction. A better book than either the above quotes or the occasional lush metaphor ("the matted, immemorial skin of vegetation that clothed the virgin prairie") or the grim textbook layout suggest, it is conventional in organization—a journey cross-country, describing the variations in landscape, climate, transportation, rural-urban contrast, etc. Doukhobors, Ukrainians, Mennonites, Eskimos, English, French, Indians all form part of the patchwork or mosaic as it is called here. Victoria is English; Toronto, the most anti-American city I know and heart of another separatist movement of English intellectuals (not a backlash against the French but a protest against American investment, and purchase and university tenure here), is at the same time "the American metropolis," as American as it is or was British. Montreal is French, volatile, visually exciting, disturbing; to Woodcock, Quebec secession "would mean the loss of Montreal without which Canada would be a far, far duller place." Then on to the maritimes, manifestly unaffluent, both the standard and style of living having diminished with the scale of the land. The Atlantic provinces have nurtured a peasant culture.

On the run, Woodcock covers the ethnic and social history of a people "daily conscious of living between a powerful and politically dangerous neighbor to the south and a bleak wilderness to the north," who "draw a satisfaction which sometimes verges on smugness from being somewhat more tolerant and more independent than the economically dominant U.S. There is also poverty, and the hardship imposed by the myth of equality; but at least here, in Quebec, no one has to lie awake at night worrying about medical bills. The health plan and family allowances cover everyone. And in Ottawa itself, a government which has lost the confidence of the voters, regardless of the term served, is out.

Woodcock also catalogues the arts, listing the names of painters, poets and architects, and discussing such related quasi-governmental corporations as the National Film Board, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the Canada Council. In politics, he indicates the delicate relationship between the provinces and the federal government, of what happens to French Canadians who enter the national scene (frequently they are regarded as *vendus*, which complicates, say, Trudeau's position), what the attitudes are towards minority groups and native peoples, never to be confused with the two so-called founding races. As a group, Canadians, who see themselves as rational, decent, unheroic and wholesome, are likely "to value honesty to the point of dullness and to distrust European deviousness even in its benevolent forms, which is why Canadian politics lack finesse and Canadian criminals are uninteresting." I must say that as national attributes go, I can, even when the low-keyed sanctimoniousness rankles, think of worse.

Among the national myths is that of the North. As Woodcock says, "a great deal of nonsense has been talked about the innocence of these children of a winter land," and there is a proclivity to romanticize the Eskimo. James Houston, the first civil administrator of West Baffin Island and the man who first brought soapstone and ivory carvings south, concocted just such a book in *The White Dawn* (Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, $6.95). A successful writer for children, he has not managed the transition to writing for adults, and the whole business has an unfortunate ersatz lyric quality that boils down to me Nanook, you Jane. Stilted, arty, curiously decadent, *The White Dawn* has a fake Homeric ring and too much tiresome rhythmic repetition. Every-

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thing is done slyly and/or cleverly; and folkways, mores and institutions as our McGill sociology primer called them, are relentlessly trotted out. The story concerns three whaleboaters who are washed up in an Eskimo camp and who spend a tutorial year before they are bumped off. The Eskimos live in a close-knit family and the theme inescapably is the ruin of the noble savage by the invasion of ostensibly civilized men. As offensive as they are disgusting, they have "been born in some far-off outlandish place, and perhaps they could never be one with us."

The saga is told in the first person by Avinga, the crippled bastard son of the chief. His vocabulary is more than ample. He is descriptive (re stone hills, "Smooth and worn they were, like the backs of walrus"), metaphoric, conceptual, analytic about custom, ritual, symbol, kinship, marriage, economics, age, time, space, the hereafter and the generation gap. The anthropological bric-a-brac includes sealskin kayaks, caribou parkas worn hair side out, dogsleds, ceremonial dances, shamans, and as in all Canadian books going back to *Anne of Green Gables*, *Maria Chapdelaine* and *Jalna*, a hell of a lot about the weather.

Margaret Atwood's novel is as filled with artifacts from Ontario as Houston's is with those from the Arctic. In *The Edible Woman* (Atlantic-Little, Brown, $5.95), we have the Toronto Sunday, and the Goody Two Shoes who assails Marian for impiety—"Jesus, she implied, would never forgive my plaid running-shoes." And the ladies who mobilize for afternoon tea, or who, if they work, bring their own teapots to the office. And the white gloves and the boots deposited in doorways in winter, and the temperance essays and the ravines and the Royal Ontario Museum and the austerely polite guard who says, "Pardon me, sir, but—ah—kissing in the Mummy Room is not permitted." And the desperate gentility of Marian's landlady with her framed ancestors and potted rubber plants and hulking 15-year-old, always referred to as "the child." The child "is being sent to an exclusive private girls' school, and she has to wear a green tunic with knee-socks to match. I'm sure she's really quite normal, but there's something cretinous about the hair-ribbon perched up on top of her gigantic body." The purity of the child is of unnatural duration.

A market-researcher, Marian copes with synthetic puddings, flies in the raisins, a laxative study in Quebec—"It can't be only the potatoes. It must be their collective guilt-complex. Or maybe the strains of the language-problem; they must be horribly repressed." She must also cope with her roommate, a tester of defective toothbrushes, pursuer of the life force, and producer of such two-bit scraps of psychoanalysis as the above; her square fiancé with his boyish grin and success orientation; and Duncan, a cadaverous perennial graduate student with a passion for ironing: flattening, getting rid of the wrinkles is his safety hatch. His roommates mother him, cook twelve-course dinners, practice calligraphy, invoke the quattrocento, and are as overqualified, overspecialized and unemployable as English graduate students everywhere. One of the boys is from Westmount (a posh community enclosed by Montreal), and his family has had to go into trade: "They own a coconut cookie factory but we aren't supposed to refer to it around the apartment; it's awkward though, these mounds of coconut cookies keep appearing and you have to eat them while pretending you don't know where they come from. I don't like coconut."

Marian, breaking out from what into what she does not know, muddles through a weight of food images. The landlady's voice is reminiscent of cold porridge. Duncan's liquid confessing is "like an uncooked egg deciding to come out of its shell: there would be a risk of spreading out too far, turning into a formless puddle." The Valentine dessert is spongy and cellular, bursting with little lungs. The planned cow arises unsummoned from the cookbook, a hairdo is a cake, "something to be carefully iced and ornamented." Finally, there is a real cake, shaped like a lady: "You look delicious. Very appetizing. And that's what will happen to you; that's what you get for being food." The cake is delectable and so is the novel, which is original, bizarre and grandly funny in its real and surreal commentary on man the consumer, and on such noble works of man as the supermarket, the beauty parlor, the executive suite, the university, the high-rise and the laundromat.

Another Ontario Novel, Robertson Davies' *Fifth Business* (Viking, $6.95), concerns three men from the same village, all of them "of the company of the twice-born." Each having rejected his beginnings, though one maintains a constant role as keeper of the conscience of one of the others, has become something unforeseeable by his parents (which is, after all, the story of North America). Dunstable Ramsay, protagonist of the plot though not of his own life, is of Scots derivation, and remembers having been a child with a Presbyterian conscience, knowledge of damnation and sense of moral superiority. The English in town looked to the Ramsays "for common sense, prudence and right opinions on virtually everything." Further, everyone in that town looked on the smaller hamlet nearby as "rustic beyond redemption." Percy, the second character, has always been of the elite—as a kid, "he had once been to Toronto to the Exhibition, and altogether breathed a larger air than the rest of us." Paul, the third, creature of circumstance, has disappeared, only to re-enter their lives. Tied by accident to Paul's mother, Dunstable becomes convinced of her sanctity. There have been three miracles, and he dedicates himself to a search for her identity rather than his own. An English girl changes his name to Dunstan—"St. Dunstan was a marvelous person and very much like you—mad about learning, terribly stiff and stern and scowly, and an absolute wizard at withstanding temptation."

Again the Ontario local color: unwanted books sent to the Grenfell Mission "on the principle that savages would read anything"; and imported Christmas Annuals for the kids; "God

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Save the King" and "O Canada" and "The Maple Leaf Forever" sung on patriotic occasions (in Quebec, for good measure, we added a fourth, "O Canada" in French); honors history at the university and a stuffed moose in the house; wretched February funerals and wretched late autumn funerals—again that bloody climate, Davies' outrageous punning—girls called Agnes Day and Gloria Mundy and Libbie Doe, and his habit of underlining (the woman at the end of her rope is tied to one literally) undercuts his own sophistication and elegance, and the manifold ironies and moral book-keeping assume elephantine proportions. The machinery creaks with cleverness. He who looks for a saint may be a saint, and Dunstan has pulled the devil's nose with tongs. The vehicle is a letter, 308 pages long.

Maria Chapdelaine's mother in the Canadian classic of that name expresses her contentment at not having emigrated west: "Among people speaking nothing but English I should have been unhappy all the rest of my days. I used to say to him: 'Samuel, we Canadians are always better off among Canadians.'" Parenthetically, the author, Louis Hémon, adds that the French Canadian never for a moment admits that the children of others, "albeit born in the country, have an equal title to be called 'Canadians.' Quite naturally, and without thought of offending, he appropriates the name won in the heroic days of his forefathers."

Today the thought of offending is irrelevant, and the term is *Québecois* rather than *Canadien*. In *White Niggers of America* (Monthly Review Press, $7.50), Pierre Vallières categorizes himself as a "Québecois, a French Canadian, a proletarian, a colonialized man, and a baptized son of the Church. Hence, an extremely frustrated individual for whom 'freedom' is not a metaphysical question but a very concrete problem." The book, written in prison and with no claim either to objectivity or to style, is part autobiography, part polemic. The first, about a very unhappy defeated family in a mean tough slum is moving and vivid; the second is the standard revolutionary handbook pegged to the specifics of the province. Vallières adjusts history, endorses violence and has, he says, the support of the Panthers, the Black Power movement, and Youth Against War and Fascism. The reflex jargon includes references to Trudeau (a former colleague on *Cité Libre*) as more or less a Whore, Robert Kennedy as "only a fascist disguised as a liberal," the church as the witch of God, Norway and England as American colonies. The non-French Canadian reader bogs down in the knowledge that the mayor of Montreal, the premier of the province, and the administration of both are French, as is the prime minster of the country. The American reader will have difficulty with the specialness of the material. What can a single passage possibly communicate that contains references to the MLP,PSQ,FLQ, CP, NDP, and FTQ—this on the heels of the CSN, SJM, and RIN?

Just as for Vallières Montreal at one time was "the city of boredom and stupidity" and New York (where ironically he was later arrested) the metropolis, so for Harding Lemay, fifth child of thirteen in a traditional large dour French Canadian family living at the border, New York was also mecca, the promised land. Although he seems to have been born on the American side (the geography is hazy), Lemay speaks of himself as French Canadian or Canuck, and in childhood the apparent stigma was further complicated by a smidgeon of Mohawk blood (not unusual) and alienation by literacy. About this, there are rather grand generalities: "The boy with the book is the enemy . . . an enemy to the boys with the guns and the fishing rods; an enemy to the girls who believe that books belong to girls, not to boys; and eventually an enemy to the mother and father, for from his books he learns about a life which denies and then defies theirs." Later, when he is in the army, we have the same going from the particular to the general: "A soldier who reads books instead of playing cards or shooting crap is, of course, the barracks eccentric. But to some he is more than merely eccentric: he is the enemy."

In his escape from the farm, Lemay was abetted by a series of fortuitous spinsters. "I was searching elsewhere for (and very often finding) the attention I craved at home. A serious little boy with good manners fills a considerable void in the lives of aging spinster schoolteachers and childless country wives. And to a child accustomed to women drudging in the kitchen and the barn, the very sight of a woman in a flowered dress and high heels is "inexplicably touching." Among the silk-stockinged and high-heeled ladies are his mother on Sundays, his Aunt Leila all the time, the teacher whose pet he was, his sister on her return from normal school, a Nazi girl, and so on.

The mother was mad, the father brutalized, eventually a suicide. For the son reality lay in books and in movies and in women picked up on the highway. "Lips bruised and shoulders lacerated, I was dropped off . . . whisky and cigarettes fouled my breath through the breaths of others, and the smell of rancid perfumes mingled with the smells of the barnyard, which never left my person."

The philosophizing carries Lemay through many steps: rural life "is not a haven for innocent growth," but "plunges the eager boy into whatever urgent pleasures are at hand." Rubble, when the institution for homeless boys in which he has lived in New York is demolished, "does not, cannot displace them or totally efface the building they worked in; not as long as boys it sheltered still survive, whether they are middle-aged family men or anonymous derelicts sleeping in the cold, sprawled against the fence of St. Marks-in-the-Bouwerie." The struggling actor (another venture) "ignores the twinges in his teeth, patches his shoes with masking tape, and turns the frayed collars on his shirts, convinced that his talents will be recognized tomorrow in some producer's office, or the day after. However he earns the money to pay his rent, he lists himself as an actor when applying for a library card."

Through the library, the theater, two marriages, he found himself an executive at Knopf. "The imprint did not ex-

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ist apart from the two egocentrics who had founded it," and the Byzantine Court (a concept not unfamiliar in publishing) included editors as courtiers, toadies, spies, minions and sycophants. Having made it, Lemay then unmade it. He abandoned his invented life, abandoned Knopf and his cracks about French Canadians; and became a teacher and writer of, among other things, soap opera. This latter talent somehow vitiates his autobiography. The anguish, the horror, the courage are doubtless all real, but the alarming over-writing and frilly intensity are terribly theatrical and distracting.

Knopf, incidentally, was not very adept in his abuse. The correct invidious term as either Vallières or Richler could tell him would not be Canuck, but Pea Soup. Like Vallières, Mordecai Richler did his growing up in Quebec under Duplessis, and so does Jake Hersh, the hero of his *St. Urbain's Horseman* (Knopf, $7.95). To Jake, Canada is "thousands of miles of wheat, indifference and self-apology" (now *there's* a line tailored for the reviewer.) Yet in London to which he expatriates himself, Jake still knows what time it is in Toronto and is oppressed by books bought in Montreal and in Toronto. A Walter Mitty in reverse, he has reveries about cancer, air crashes, pyorrhea; his baby may be defective, his sister may shoplift, the extermination officers may come "seeking out the Jew vermin." In his own eyes a washout, "an alienated Jew, modishly ugly," he dreams up the golden line, "I'm a respecter of institutions, an all-around good chap. A big talker, but a chicken. Even in Paris, I remained a Canadian. I puffed hashish but I didn't inhale."

His first aim, like that of Vallières and again Lemay, was New York, but the immigration officer prevented him from entering. His cousin Jenny escapes to Ontario, the CBC, and ghetto-emancipated canapes. "Jenny's Toronto people were very, very sophisticated, everybody a nonconformist, seeing right through *Time* and the frame-up of Alger Hiss, and against war-mongering in Korea"; but for Jake and his friend Luke, Toronto proves ugly and provincial, a farm club, and they go to that other metropolis, London.

Jake has the standard Jewish martyr mother, an aunt who tells Jenny—Miss Hotzenklotz—to "study up on Walt Disney's dog," to which the answer is "For your information it just so happens that Plato was one of the foremost philosphers of all time," and an uncle Abe, QC, the family success, who rubs Jake's nose in that recent Quebec with signs reading *A bas les juifs,* or No Dogs No Jews; with restricted resorts and segregated housing and university quotas. Abe has made his compromises and has seen them triumph. And Jake in a puzzled, pained way sees in the abandoned milieu a world where smack is what a disrespectful child deserves, where pot is what the chicken soup goes into, where camp is where the kids go for the summer, where brides still marry in The Star and get pear shaped boys for prizes, where aunts call one another every morning to discuss who has passed an exam or survived an operation. "They were ignorant of the arts, they were overdressed, they were overstuffed, and their taste was appallingly bad. But within their self-contained world there was order. It worked."

And Jake's life is in disconnected compartments. Married to a gentile, he has family problems. Like his mindless uncles, he is a provider, but worse—as a director, he is "a provider with pretensions," and with career difficulties and absurd trouble with the law. Not fully Canadian, not fully Jewish, certainly not American (they wouldn't let him in) certainly not British, he lacks the poise of Luke who can say what the hell, "We're on the *Titanic*. It's going down. Everything, everybody. Me, I've decided to travel first-class."

The title involves a symbolic and real search for another self. Richler's books are rich in texture and substance and in the combining of crazy humor with doubt. This one has a particularly involved format in which time, space and experience are kaleidoscopically juggled, so that choice and moral stance are in multiple perspective. As always, the idiom is fine, and the nervous energy galvanizing; but a slight bleaching is induced by the lack of dimension in two of the main characters. Nancy, the goysie wife, with her gardening and her foot-stamping about Jewish hocus-pocus, is a paper doll, and Luke, the patrician WASP friend has no blood at all. And yet like Uncle Abe's life, the book works. Perhaps then the dilution was deliberate.

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Steinfels (Cont.)

the East.

There is a further irony here, of course, a tone in Ahmad's pronouncements which resembles a little that of the State Department casuists he opposes, who explain how the media may have exaggerated the suffering or who have premonitions of terrible bloodbaths.

But obviously Eqbal Ahmad knows the land and its people as I do not; and his argument has the merit of acknowledging the central issue, the struggle of the Bengalis for independence, and the depth of the conflict. Other issues were stressed by commentators ranging from "high officials" in Washington (read: Kissinger) to *Times* editorials, to third-world nations at the UN: Did India's action prevent further negotiations about the status of East Bengal? What of the risks of secessionist movements? To me, anyway, both questions seemed widely off the mark.

Take the secessionist question first. One might think it was rather a unique case when the majority of a nation are found desirous of "secession" from the minority, and a case which would only bother regimes at odds with large majorities rather than small minorities. But beyond that, the "argument from precedent," the notion that minorities try to secede, and make a popular go of it, because something similar happened in another part of the globe, is highly doubtful. In fact, by that very logic, the Bangladesh movement should never have occurred. Remember? Wasn't Biafra crushed in the name of this argument? So the Awami League leadership, had the "argument from precedent"

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anything to it, should have learned from the fate of Biafra, and kept their place. The only nations for whom the birth of Bangladesh will create secessionist problems are possibly Pakistan, which has other minorities in the West, and India itself, which evidently is willing to run the risk, no doubt thinking that a continuing guerrilla war in the volatile Bengal region is no better an alternative.

The question of negotiations was more emphasized—and was more revelatory of how little has been learned from Vietnam. The possibility that Islamabad would have awakened from its dream world and tried to turn back the clock and begun devising a settlement for an autonomous East Bengal of some sort, was small enough. The possibility that the Bengali leadership would have, *could* have, agreed to such steps, was infinitesimal. Too much had happened. The East Pakistanis had struggled for a long time to gain their day in the election booths. It came. They won. And then the victory was taken away, ripped away, blasted away, in a bloody massacre stretched into a bloody repression. So, say the negotiators, let us return to Square One. Maybe, just maybe, we can arrange another election!

What disturbs me about the people who strike this attitude, and what links it with our folly in Vietnam, is the inability it manifests to believe that other people's causes are really serious, the sort that men might die for and not be "reasonable" about.

The choice in the Asian subcontinent was between a protracted guerrilla war and Indian intervention. You may tot up the pros and cons of either alternative as you wish, but those were the alternatives. I do not think that the refugee problem, however serious, could be considered a matter of self-defense for India; certainly, to haul out the old but useful criteria of a just war, invasion was not the last resort as far as the refugee crisis went. What India did in crossing the border was very grave.

I am not convinced, however, judging from the fragmentary reports of the guerrilla actions, the Pakistani reprisals and mass punishments wrecked on villages, invasion and bombing, and the postwar incidents of revenge, that the bloodshed caused by the war was any greater than that which a guerrilla struggle of some months, let alone years, would have caused. I lean to the conclusion that the latter course would have indeed been bloodier. Vengeance is not cooled by a protracted fight, in which the fratricidal elements were daily growing more important.

The choice, then, was not between war and peace; but between one kind of war and another. India and the Soviet Union, for reasons of self-interest, but which are also reasons that may have contributed to stability and minimized the suffering, chose one kind of war. The Chinese, the U.S., most of the nations of the UN, chose another. There are arguments to be made for that second choice; but let us not call it "peace." War is not (yet) peace.

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MICHAEL CRAWFORD

INVECTIVE AGAINST THE ANTI-METAPHORITES

To be sound asleep
in summer heat

and to dream of waking
from that dream

beneath hot maples
upon good grass

near The Sound
off Gineva Beach

is to know the inheritors
of this imagined maze

(where what we do
is what we dream)

without the gnatty studies
of the scrying ghost

in rectangular weather
in reasoned tweed.

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BOOKS

'The best American novel in a decade'

Rabbit Redux

JOHN UPDIKE

Knopf, $7.95

JOHN HEIDENRY

One always senses with John Updike that he is so much better than any other American writer, and yet that, even with *Rabbit Redux,* his best book—and the best American novel in a decade—he is capable of so much more. Why? Any answer would have to be immoderate, for the question already presumes too much. It would more easily be said that Updike simply does his best—like any artist trying to forge the conscience of his race upon the smithy of his soul. But in an odd way Updike seems not to want to bother with the sublimer pursuits of art. Let the race, he seems to say, forge its own conscience. One gathers that in a time of great national achievement or crisis, his work cut out for him, he would agree, might be able, to write a masterpiece; as it is, in that homogenous hour of American suburbia, he is content to write only more brilliantly than anyone else. In that respect he is something of a literary Mr. Jones, whom all other American writers have to keep up with.

Paradoxically—if there can be paradoxes in Penn Villas, the suburban development where Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom now lives—the American hour ten years later does indeed seem to be one of crisis and achievement. From out of the television endlessly blaring comes news of the latest stage of the moon shot, or of some new development in civil-rights activism. Harry's father worries about the race riots in Detroit and in nearby York. But for Harry it is all in one ear and out the other, something he overhears while pasing into the kitchen to get a beer from the icebox. Sometimes, on the bus home from work, he prays briefly and tries to get his head straight. But basically there are only two things that distract Rabbit's suburban repose: the Vietnam War, and that other enemy-type action: code-name sex. Harry is like a man who has awakened from the Great American Dream—like a good Korean vet into some interminable suburban reveille; and so he supports his nation's war efforts like one who, having slept well and trusting in the promise that all will be hushabye again, for the moment tries only to remember those misty words of lullaby about why the Vietnam War was good and why little babies sometimes have to die.

Awake now, in that Saturday blear of lawn-raking or taking the kid for a visit to the folks, he is too prosaic and honest to look at what he sees as some second-rate nightmare that will not last. Like the sages of yore, he wants to look at reality straight and see it whole. As his head clears, there is even some vague suspicion that the long American sleep may not have been that of the just. But Harry has also awakened with a morning erection; and life, Harry, suburbia being what they are, or what they aren't, he would rather browse at the perimeter of sex than at that of his conscience—until inevitably, later, he discovers that the matrix of the two is the same.

At the end of ten years, slack-gutting into middle-age, Harry's first lesson is that his phallus is a bit like government surplus. When he had run, ah: run away those many years earlier, afleet into the dream, what he had wanted most of all was to be his own man. As the basketball star of a small town he had, if not achieved an identity, at least transcended anonymity; but marriage, reality, was ruining all that, and he fled—abandoned the responsibility of having to be, work, make love, have children like everybody else. When, not surprisingly, he came back, took out a mortgage for a home in suburban Penn Villas, got a job in the same printing plant as his father, the only last refuge of individuality was in the marriage bed where that secret phallus might be unveiled; he could always get by with letting everything else go slack so long as his penis did not. Even the raised upper lip that had once caused everyone to call him Rabbit had nearly disappeared into the plumping jowl and cheek. Reduxed, with a vengeance, Harry seemed to lead a life almost more like everyone else's than anyone else.

Thus when Harry's wife starts skipping out and eventually goes to live with a used-car salesman who works in her daddy's lot, Harry's reaction is not so much shame or anger, as wonder that his wife, as dull together in bed as they both were—that last refuge of self-expression being humble and ordinary enough—could possibly be found desirable by anyone else, or that there might be at all some carnal merit to that housewifely psyche or physique, that he had not already sluggishly exploited a thousand times over in drowsy orgasmic satisfaction. Soon after, he learns from her that she "does things" for the car salesman that she had never done for him. What things?

The question, transformed, becomes, in Harry's vague way, a kind of rediscovery of America, a voyage of self across strange seas—merely to the other side of town—where the natives are not Indians, but Blacks; and it is not he who makes the peace offering, but they, with a little pot. Before long, his prefab suburban home has become a kind of squatters' refuge from the wilderness, a halfway house to reality. Harry suddenly finds himself surrounded by all kinds of skinny people. Skeeter, a stringy Black revolutionary, goes down under Harry's punches but leads, at the end of each round, in ideological points. Jill, a waif-child and zombie refugee from lands of the living dead, the acid

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underworld and Connecticut high society, nonchalantly helps Harry learn those un-American things about sex that he had always wanted to know but was afraid to ask. His son, Nelson, is in eighth grade and already has long hair and is beginning to talk like a hippie. Briefly, Harry learns a few more lessons: that there was never any Great American Dream for those who had no place to lay their head; or that indeed for some it was nothing except nightmare and hallucination; or, for the newest American generation, that it's all just a big crock and who cares. More and more, Harry's apple pie tastes processed and full of chemicals, and even American motherhood—his own once fiercely indomitable parent—has gone the way of L-dopa; but to his credit Harry this time does not run, but holds his ground: hedging at those indistinct perimeters only so that he might retreat to some center fortress of rock-bottom truth. Perhaps he understands that he has failed, or that America has failed; he cannot be sure; but something is telling him—perhaps that near-extinct, bald-headed eagle still clutching to his shoulder—that not everything could have been for nothing. Skeeter and Nelson laughed at his old-fashioned set-shot, but nevertheless he somehow had swished the ball through the net. Perhaps there will just have to be a few new rules, and he will have to get back into shape. What things?

Throughout the book Updike writes with a cool and inspired command. The now familiar locale is a place called Brewer, Pennsylvania, but it would be trite to call it a microcosm of America. In this country there are no more microcosms; everything is the same, filling over with parking lots and the antifacts of suburban planning. Everything is like America's new kind of apple pie, each slice tastelessly the same. If this is a half-truth, it should entirely be believed, so that it may not come true.

It is a bit ridiculous, finally, that so much has been made of Updike's style of prose, in a derogatory sense: that it is too fancy, mere bric-a-brac and curlicue, when real writers ought to be concerned with the message pure and simple. If it were pure and simple as that, any number of hacks who have indeed latched onto a weighty theme or two might qualify as literary artists; with such generous standards, someone like Malamud would be regarded as a middling good writer, and John Hawkes, for examples, as a great one. But what will keep them out of even the basement of the American parthenon is the fact that neither of them, nor most of their peers, knows how to write an exceptional English sentence, much less a paragraph; and far less an entire book. As for their weighty themes, *engagé* or otherwise, most of it is trumped-up make-believe terror, written for the edification of college kids and too bright housewives, with about as much penetration into the heart of darkness as most priests, for example, have—that is, do not have—into sin. John Updike is not a great writer but with Norman Mailer and Truman Capote he is one of only three first-rate prose writers that this country has. It might be said that America does indeed have two literary geniuses, Vladimir Nabokov and Isaac Bashevis Singer, but their circumstances and background simply have to exempt them from this kind of discussion.

There are some criticisms that could be made of *Rabbit Redux*: that it perhaps ends before Updike finishes it; that, incidentally, the title is a bit corny or queer; that Harry and his like are of a limited aesthetic grade, a rich vein but not really leading to the abundant, deep-down lode of masterpiece. One is excused for talking in terms of such comparison and expectation because Updike is clearly in striking range. *Rabbit Redux* is the best novel of a decade—what can really compare?—but in a land of such lean annual harvest, the accolade is almost a recrimination.

In a famous preface to a famous book, Joseph Conrad once said that "A work of art that aspires, however, humbly, to the condition of art should carry its justification in every line." Such a statement is likely to strike most American readers, even most American writers, as perhaps too consciously noble and pretentious, but it is true nevertheless; and it is equally true that Updike, in that so-called fancy prose, does better than anyone else justify his art in every line. In his lesser and in fact American way he also possesses what F. R. Leavis termed Conrad's "adjectival insistence upon inexpressible and incomprehensible mystery." He falls short of the mark, but only because he has not yet found that *mysterium americanum*—or whatever it is—for which he seeks, or should seek. At one time he apparently thought it was sex; this latest book seems to indicate that it is not, or at least not entirely. One of these days his fancy prose style may just tell us what it is after all. What things?

REVIEWERS

JOHN HEIDENRY is at home writing a novel.

JAMES KRITZECK is professor of Oriental Languages and History at the University of Notre Dame.

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Mohammed

MAXIME RODINSON

Pantheon, $8.95

Christian and Muslim in Africa

NOEL Q. KING

Harper & Row, $5.95

JAMES KRITZECK

It is not as odd as it might first appear to consider these two books together. We in the "West" are just beginning to understand Mohammed's message, prompted in no small measure by its extraordinary appeal to Africans today. For that matter, we have seen its attraction for numerous Americans of African decent.

"There is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is the messenger of Allah" is the formula of "witnessing" to Islam. So strongly does Islam insist on the oneness of a transcendent Godhead who revealed himself most finally in the Koran, and so powerfully and constantly does it arrange its believers in concentric circles around the Holy House, the Kaaba in Mecca, that the person of Mohammed sometimes seems almost to disappear; before the book he "recited" and amidst the ranks of Muslims he taught to bow down in worship of one God. This often surprises non-Muslims, who persist in calling the religion Mohammedanism.

Therefore, Mohammed remains somewhat shadowy and enigmatic, in spite of countless biographies by Muslims and non-Muslims. The latest, Rodinson's, is also one of the best. The author introduces himself almost swaggeringly as an atheist. He is "convinced that, provided he takes enough trouble, and totally excludes any contempt, pharisaism or sense of superiority, an atheist can in fact understand a religious outlook—certainly as well as an art critic can understand a painter, an adult a child, a man of robust health an invalid (and vice versa) or a scholarly recluse a businessman. Certainly a religious man would understand my subject differently, but better? I am not so sure."

What makes the book so successful, however, is something even a theist might be expected eventually to have stumbled upon: a satisfactory methodology. Rodinson has, first of all, mastered his sources. Then he has actually pared the story (an immense undertaking) to eliminate all but the solidly factual or highy credible. Then he has balanced off previous interpretations in light of his own, "of a man's life through the experiences of his youth and his personal circumstances among his relatives and early acquaintances . . . as well as those issuing from the society at large."

Somehow that does not sound all that clever or difficult; but 313 clever and difficult pages later, we arrive at the conclusion: "Mohammed was a complex man, full of contradictions. He was fond of his pleasures, yet indulged in bouts of asceticism. He was often compassionate, yet sometimes cruel. He was a believer, consumed with the love and fear of his God, and a politician ready for any expedient. Without any great gift of eloquence in ordinary life, he was able for a short period to produce, from his unconscious, phrases of disturbing poetic quality. He was cool and nervous, brave and timid, a mixture of cunning and frankness, forgiving and at the same time capable of terrible vindictiveness, proud and humble, chaste and sensual, intelligent and, in certain things, oddly stupid. But there was a power in him which, with the help of circumstances, was to make him one of the rare men who have turned the world upside down." In other words, all previous biographers were right but, rather like heretics, concentrated on only parts of the whole.

The tussle between Islam and Chris-

A Yankee Imperialist In King Arthur's Court

It was back in the last days of Camelot, right before that fatal Thanksgiving of 1963, that I gave an American Literature class at Georgetown a quiz on Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. "Would you do things differently," I asked, "if you found yourself in the position of the Yankee, thrown back to the sixth century or into some other culture so 'backward' that you would be a superman by contrast?"

Yes, most said, they would avoid the Yankee's mistakes and consolidate their power more quickly. Perhaps in the shadow of the coup that had deposed Diem a week or two before, a few suggested that the Yankee's chief mistake was in not murdering Merlin immediately. Well, these were foreign service majors, so perhaps their response was not typical.

This fall I asked another class the same question I asked in 1963. Now the folly of our war abroad and the waste of the environment at home have shown students the horror of Twain's myth of progress. Many now find the "backward" civilization of King Arthur infinitely preferable to the dubious improvements of the Yankee, whose only qualification for remaking the world was his former employment as foreman of an arms factory in the nineteenth century.

Today's college readers hit upon the Yankee's first perception of Camelot as a vision of paradise: "It was a soft, reposeful summer landscape, as lovely as a dream, and as lonesome as Sunday. The air was full of the smell of flowers, and the buzzing of insects, and the twittering of birds, and there were no people, no wagons, there was no stir of life,

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tianity for Africa and the Africans is the subject of King's book. While that tussle began, in a curious kind of way, even before the year 1 of the Islamic era, when Mohammed "emigrated" from Mecca to Medina, its endless history has not been particularly well studied or even noticed by outsiders until the Age of Imperialism and its contemporary aftermath have brought it to the fore.

This book is a fair introduction to the subject, but totters between a rueful and an exculpatory view of the Christian mission in Africa. In its bold strokes it is splendid: "The Arabness of Islam is a kind of carapace or shell which can give her strength to do her work and be herself wherever she goes. To Christianity her Europeanness is *impedimenta*, luggage she has picked up which may or may not be useful . . . There is at Edinburgh a fourteenth-century Muslim illuminated manuscript which shows the Prophet Mohammed riding on a war-camel conversing with Jesus riding on an ass. For the last eighty years or so their roles have been reversed in Africa; Christianity came in with conquerors and Islam came in meek and lowly. They have each had their due reward." However, some of its finer lines seem less well done. To cite but one example, it seems to me incredible that anyone could dismiss Charles de Foucauld, of all people, mystic, religious founder, martyr, in a parenthetical remark: "Knowing what we do today of the use military men can make of any innocently collected information, and what French and Italian imperialists did in the Sahara, the killing of the father should cause less surprise than his being spared so long." That is an awful piece of flippancy.

The flavor of the seminars and lectures from which the book derives is still there, including a bit of outdated American slang which the author wants to connect with the Santa Cruz campus of the University of California. But the "Do-It-Yourself Notes, Sources, and Reading List" at the end, nearly 30 jam-packed (Santa Cruz?) pages, is absolutely the finest of its kind anywhere.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 35)

any older automobile worker or steel worker.

MICHAEL HARRINGTON

nothing going on." Nothing going on—well, that will soon change. And the Yankee's last memory—trapped by a mountain of corpses of the 30,000 knights he has dynamited, machine-gunned and electrocuted—now becomes a vision of the ultimate war in which you lose even if you win.

Bing's Camelot

Last November, as an exercise in popular misreading of our classic literature, I showed my class the 1949 musical in which Bing Crosby sang his way to the heart of Camelot, killing only one person along the way. When my students, almost all born in the Eisenhower years, complained that Twain's pessimism was entirely missing from the film, I suggested that the film took its confidence from the fact it had been made right after our most successful application of force in the war of their fathers. Korea and Vietnam were still but dreams in the womb of history.

Surely, I reasoned, no one could make such a simple-minded pot-boiler today; a current adaptation would have to be an allegory of mindless progress, of inappropriate democratic notions leading to chaos. So much for my predictions: a few days later someone brought me the announcement of a fun-filled 90-minute animated cartoon. Yes, you guessed it: the Yankee's updated adventures were to be General Mills' Thanksgiving offering. "Bright holiday fare for you and your kids," said *TV Guide*—"What does a Connecticut Yankee do on foreign soil? Modernize, or make a hearty stab at it."

I particularly like that business about the "hearty stab": O.K. kids, if you can't modernize and improve foreign soil, at least stab, slash, shoot, or bomb. We haven't lost our innocent love of force and trickery after all, and we'll thrust the old vision upon yet another generation.

JULIAN SMITH

(Julian Smith teaches in the Department of English at Ithaca College.)

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Some Things Change

IN ITS FIRST New Year's issue, forty-seven years ago, *Commonweal* touched on certain issues that have a familiar ring today. The Finance Ministers of the allied European nations are about to meet to "focus attention" on the "terribly tangled economic conditions of Europe." Moreover, the United States and the great powers of Europe plan to hold a new conference on the reduction of armaments. The editors are conscious of a strain "between the western nations and the people of Africa and Asia." Finally, this editorial plea: "let public opinion make its demand for peace and justice and charity in the ears of political and economic leaders."

But in January 1925 the country was already saddled with Cal Coolidge, while 1972's Presidential election is still pending. Other reflections of a different era include a lead editorial accusing Calvinism of too exclusive a reliance on the Bible and a failure to recognize values produced outside of Christianity. Carlton J. H. Hayes feels called upon to make a strong plea to American Catholics to perform their civic duties. *Commonweal* also finds it necessary to defend the Church against charges of immoral conditions in the Philippines.

Perhaps most marked of all in contrast is that issue's emphasis on the threat of Russian Bolshevism. It tells how Pius XI greets the return of the Pontifical Relief Mission from famine-stricken Soviet Russia with a warning of "the grave dangers and inevitable injuries of socialism and communism."

Present-day ecumenism in the religious world and negotiation between East and West under coexistence have brought about many changes in the picture. 1972 will bring several more. Follow them with a *Commonweal* constantly aware of both permanence and change. Make a good start in the New Year and send for a trial subscription!

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